

DISCLOSURE DIVISION

☒ **WAIVER REQUEST**
☐ **ANSWER**
☐ **RECONSIDERATION REQUEST**
☐ **UNTIMELY**

DATE: 6/15/2021

DOCKET #: 2021-502

Ashley Wimberley, Director
Disclosure Division

FILER INFORMATION

Name: Thomas B. Patton
Address: 2860 Highway 80, Choudrant, LA 71227-3076
Office/Position: Choudrant Board of Alderman / Choudrant / Lincoln
of Disclosures/Amendments Filed with Agency: 4
Years Covered: 2016-2019
Final Report: No

REPORT INFORMATION

Name of Report: Tier 3 Annual Personal Financial Disclosure covering calendar year 2019
Report ID: PFD21001314
Original Due Date: 7/6/2020
NOD Received: 2/11/2021
NOD Signed by: Mail Carrier - Covid19 KW
PFD/Answer Due Date based on NOD: 2/25/2021
PFD/Answer Filed: 3/1/2021

LATE FEE INFORMATION

Amount of Late Fee: \$200
Days late from receipt of NOD: 4
Total days late from initial due date: 238
Late Fee Order Received: 3/11/2021
Payment/Waiver Request Due Date: 3/31/2021
Waiver Request Received: 3/2/2021

COMMENTS:

Celeste Butler, Village of Choudrant, Clerk is requesting a waiver on behalf of Thomas B. Patton. Ms. Butler stated Mr. Patton failed to file his disclosure because of her actions. At each April Town Council Meeting she provides a financial statement of their parish income. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, they were unable to have the April or May 2020 meetings. She forgot about filing the annual disclosure. Mr. Patton gave Ms. Butler his disclosure to submit to the BOE once he received his NOD She held the PFD to be mailed along with another members' PFD, that also received an NOD. She did not know she could fax or upload the disclosure statements. Due to inclement weather her office was closed all week and the ice storm stopped both incoming and outgoing mail. She feels that she is accountable for Mr. Patton's late fee assessment.

OTHER LATE FEE INFORMATION

Disclosure Statements:

- Other Outstanding Statements: No
- Other Outstanding Late Fees: No
- Prior Late Fees: No
- Reassessed Late Fees: No

Campaign Finance:

- Outstanding Late Fees: No
- Prior Late Fees: No

Village of Choudrant

PO Box 288 ♦ Choudrant, Louisiana 71227 ♦ 318-768-4111

March 2, 2021

Louisiana Board of Ethics
Post Office Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Dear Board Members,

This letter is in response to fines assessed against John W. Croswell and Thomas B. Patton, Aldermen for the Village of Choudrant in Lincoln Parish. These gentlemen failed to submit their Tier 3 Financial Disclosure Statements for 2019 in a timely manner, partly due to my actions.

Each year at our April town Council meeting, I present statements of their income from the Village of Choudrant for the prior year. These gentlemen are given \$25 for each monthly meeting they attend during a calendar year, always less than \$300 annually. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to meet in April or May, and I failed to produce their statements. Unfortunately, the Tier 3s were not remembered once we were able to meet again.

When Mr. Croswell, Mr. Patton, Alderman Rick Maier, and Police Chief Bobby Milner received letters from The Department of Ethics early this year, they each contacted me for the financial statements. I offered to send the forms in for them once completed. I emailed Ms. Ashley Wimberly, Director of the Disclosure Division, that I had Mr. Croswell's and was awaiting Mr. Maier's. She said the files were noted. Unaware that Mr. Croswell's could have been forward by email, I held it in my office awaiting Mr. Maier's, only to find that Mr. Maier had mailed his himself. By holding Mr. Croswell's, I caused a fine to be assessed against him.

Mr. Patton signed his form late in the day on February 12 in my office. Again, had I known a fax or email would have sufficed, I certainly would have sent the form that day. An ice storm prevented us from getting to the office the entire week following. The storm prevented any mail coming in or out of this area. Once we returned to the office on Monday, February 22, I failed to tell the receptionist that the form was to be mailed. When I noticed it on her desk yesterday, it was scanned and emailed to Ms. Wimberly stating that it was about to be mailed to her. That was when I found out that original signature was not required. A fine has now been assessed for Mr. Patton.

ETHICS BOARD REC'D
MAR 8 '21 AM 9:44

I am requesting a waiver of these fines for these two gentlemen, as their forms would have likely been received within the 7 days of notice had I not gotten involved. I do realize it is ultimately their responsibility to file, but I feel that I am accountable for their fines.

Your consideration of this request is sincerely appreciated. Please feel free to contact me should more information be needed. I can be reached by email at celeste@choudrant.org, or my office phone, 318-768-4111. I can also be reached on my personal mobile number – 318-245-9299.

With gratitude and best regards,



Celeste H. Butler, Clerk
Village of Choudrant

The Village of Choudrant is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

info@choudrant.org ♦ fax 318-768-2147 ♦ www.choudrant.org



Village of Choudrant

P. O. Box 288

Choudrant, LA 71227

www.choudrant.org

U.S. MAIL
SHREVEPORT LA 710



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Louisiana Board of Ethics

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